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SUNDAY:

MARRYBELL MADURO
SINGER
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

MONDAY:

ANDERSON BAHAMON
SINGER
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

TUESDAY:

JEAN PAUL
SAXOPHONIST
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

WEDNESDAY:

MAILLEYN ALVARADO
VIOLINIST
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

THURSDAY:

MARRYBELL MADURO
SINGER
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

FRIDAY:

MAILLEYN ALVARADO
VIOLINIST
7:00 TO 9:00 P.M.

SATURDAY:

RICKY THOMAS
GUITAR
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.



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Democrats and advocates criticize Trump's executive order on homelessness

By JANIE HAR and CHARLOTTE KRAMON

The Associated Press/Report for America

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) —

Leading Democrats and advocates for the homeless are criticizing an executive order President Donald Trump signed this week aimed at removing homeless people from the streets, possibly by committing them for mental health or drug treatment without their consent.

Trump directed some of his Cabinet heads to prioritize funding to cities that crack down on open drug use and street camping, with the goal of making people feel safer. It's not compassionate to do nothing, the order states.

"Shifting these individuals into long-term institutional settings for humane treatment is the most proven way to restore public order," the order reads.

Homelessness has become a bigger problem in recent years as the cost of housing increased, especially in states such as California where there aren't enough homes to meet demand. At the same time, drug addiction and overdoses have soared with the avail-



Tents are set up along a freeway in a homeless encampment, May 12, 2025, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

ability of cheap and potent fentanyl.

The president's order might be aimed at liberal cities such as San Francisco, Los Angeles and New York, which Trump views as too lax about conditions on their streets. But many of the concepts have already been proposed or tested in California, where Gov. Gavin Newsom and Democratic mayors have worked for years to get people off the streets and into treatment.

Last year, the U.S. Supreme Court made it easier for cit-

ies to clear encampments even if the people living in them have nowhere else to go.

Still, advocates say Trump's new order is vague, punitive and won't effectively end homelessness.

Newsom has directed cities to clean up homeless encampments and he's funneled more money into programs to treat addiction and mental health disorders.

His office said Friday that Trump's order relies on harmful stereotypes and focuses more on "creating

distracting headlines and settling old scores."

"But, his imitation (even poorly executed) is the highest form of flattery," spokesperson Tara Gallegos said in a statement, referring to the president calling for strategies already in use in California.

San Francisco Mayor Daniel Lurie has also emphasized the importance of clean and orderly streets in banning homeless people from living in RVs and urging people to accept the city's offers of shelter. In Silicon Valley, San Jose

Mayor Matt Mahan recently pushed a policy change that makes a person eligible for jail if they reject three offers of shelter.

Trump's executive order tasks Attorney General Pam Bondi and the secretaries for health, housing and transportation to prioritize grants to states and local governments that enforce bans on open drug use and street camping.

Devon Kurtz, the public safety policy director at the Cicero Institute, a conservative policy group that has advocated for several of the provisions of the executive order, said the organization is "delighted" by the order.

He acknowledged that California has already been moving to ban encampments since the Supreme Court's decision. But he said Trump's order adds teeth to that shift, Kurtz said. "It's a clear message to these communities that were still sort of uncomfortable because it was such a big change in policy," Kurtz said.

But Steve Berg, chief policy officer at the National Alliance to End Homelessness, called parts of the order vague. □

Deportation flights from Florida's 'Alligator Alcatraz' detention center have begun, DeSantis says

BY JOHN SEEWER

Associated Press

Deportation flights from the remote Everglades immigration lockup known as Alligator Alcatraz have begun and are expected to increase soon, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said Friday.

The first flights operated by the Department of Homeland Security have transferred about 100 detainees from the immigration detention center to other countries, DeSantis said during a news conference near the facility.

"You're going to see the numbers go up dramatically," he said.

Two or three flights have already departed, but officials didn't say where those flights headed.

Critics have condemned

the South Florida facility as cruel and inhumane. DeSantis and other Republican officials have defended it as part of the state's

aggressive push to support President Donald Trump's crackdown on illegal immigration.

Building the facility in the Everglades and naming it after a notorious federal prison were meant as deterrents, DeSantis and other officials have said.

The White House has delighted in the area's remoteness about 50 miles (80 kilometers) west of Miami and the fact that it is teeming with pythons and alligators. It hopes to send a message that repercussions will be severe if U.S. immigration laws are broken. Trump has suggested that his administration

could reopen Alcatraz, the notorious island prison in San Francisco Bay. The White House also has sent some immigrants awaiting deportation to a detention lockup in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and others to a megaprison in El Salvador.

The Everglades facility was built in a matter of days over 10 square miles (26 square kilometers). It features more than 200 security cameras and more than 5 miles (8 kilometers) of barbed wire. An adjacent runway makes it more convenient for homeland security officials to move detainees in and out of the site. □



This image from a video feed shows Gov. Ron DeSantis speaking about deportation flights from the remote Everglades immigration lockup known as "Alligator Alcatraz" on July 25, 2025 in Ochopee, Florida.

Associated Press

Judge blocks Trump's birthright citizenship restrictions in third ruling since high court decision

By MICHAEL CASEY

Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — A federal judge on Friday blocked the Trump administration from ending birthright citizenship for the children of parents who are in the U.S. illegally, issuing the third court ruling blocking the birthright order nationwide since a key Supreme Court decision in June.

U.S. District Judge Leo Sorokin, joining another district court as well as an appellate panel of judges, found that a nationwide injunction granted to more than a dozen states remains in force under an exception to the Supreme Court ruling. That decision restricted the power of lower-court judges to issue nationwide injunctions. The states have argued Trump's birthright citizenship order is blatantly unconstitutional and threatens millions of dollars for health insurance services that are contingent on citizenship status. The issue is expected to move quickly back to the nation's highest court.

Lawyers for the government had argued Sorokin should narrow the reach of his earlier ruling granting a preliminary injunction, arguing it should be "tailored to the States' purported financial injuries."



Demonstrators holds up a banner during a citizenship rally outside of the Supreme Court in Washington, May 15, 2025.

"The record does not support a finding that any narrower option would feasibly and adequately protect the plaintiffs from the injuries they have shown they are likely to suffer," Sorokin wrote.

Sorokin acknowledged his order would not be the last word on birthright citizenship. Trump and his administration "are entitled to pursue their interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment, and no doubt the Supreme Court will ultimately

settle the question," Sorokin wrote. "But in the meantime, for purposes of this lawsuit at this juncture, the Executive Order is unconstitutional." The administration has not yet appealed any of the recent court rulings. Trump's efforts to deny citizenship to children born to parents who are in the country illegally or temporarily will remain blocked unless and until the Supreme Court says otherwise. An email asking for the White House's response to the ruling was sent Friday.

A federal judge in New Hampshire issued a ruling earlier this month prohibiting Trump's executive order from taking effect nationwide in a new class-action lawsuit. U.S. District Judge Joseph LaPlante in New Hampshire had paused his own decision to allow for the Trump administration to appeal, but with no appeal filed in the last week, his order went into effect.

On Wednesday, a San Francisco-based appeals court found the president's execu-

tive order unconstitutional and affirmed a lower court's nationwide block.

A Maryland-based judge said this week that she would do the same if an appeals court signed off.

The justices ruled last month that lower courts generally can't issue nationwide injunctions, but it didn't rule out other court orders that could have nationwide effects, including in class-action lawsuits and those brought by states. The Supreme Court did not decide whether the underlying citizenship order is constitutional.

Plaintiffs in the Boston case earlier argued that the principle of birthright citizenship is "enshrined in the Constitution," and that Trump does not have the authority to issue the order, which they called a "flagrantly unlawful attempt to strip hundreds of thousands of American-born children of their citizenship based on their parentage." They also argue that Trump's order halting automatic citizenship for babies born to people in the U.S. illegally or temporarily would cost states funding they rely on to "provide essential services" — from foster care to health care for low-income children, to "early interventions for infants, toddlers, and students with disabilities." □

Associated Press



Matt Stone, left, and Trey Parker attend the Comedy Central Adult Animation: "South Park," "Beavis & Butt-Head," and "Digman!" panel during Comic-Con International on Thursday, July 24, 2025, in San Diego.

Associated Press

By ANDREW DALTON

AP Entertainment Writer

SAN DIEGO (AP) — "South Park" co-creator Trey Parker had the briefest of responses Thursday to anger

from the White House over the season premiere of the animated institution, which showed a naked President Donald Trump in bed with Satan.

'South Park' co-creator jokes he's 'terribly sorry' over premiere that drew White House anger

"We're terribly sorry," Parker said, followed by a long, deadpan-comic stare. Parker was asked for his reaction to the fracas as he sat on the stage at San Diego's Comic-Con International at the beginning of a Comedy Central animation panel that also included his "South Park" partner Matt Stone, "Beavis and Butt-Head" creator Mike Judge, and actor Andy Samberg, who co-created the animated "Digman!" Earlier in the day, the White House issued a statement on the 27th sea-

son premiere, which aired Wednesday night.

"This show hasn't been relevant for over 20 years and is hanging on by a thread with uninspired ideas in a desperate attempt for attention," White House spokesperson Taylor Rogers said in the statement. "President Trump has delivered on more promises in just six months than any other president in our country's history — and no fourth-rate show can derail President Trump's hot streak."

Later in the panel, Parker

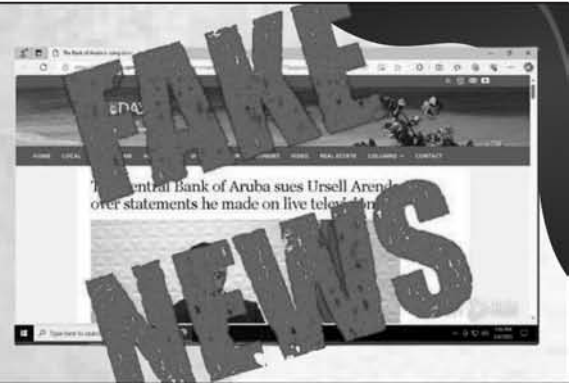
said they did get a note from their producers on Tuesday night's episode.

"They said, 'OK, but we're gonna blur the penis,' and I said, 'No you're not gonna blur the penis,'" Parker said. The premiere also took aim at Paramount and its \$16 million recent settlement with Trump just hours after Parker and Stone signed a five-year deal with the company for 50 new episodes and streaming rights to previous seasons. The Los Angeles Times and other outlets report the deal was worth \$1.5 billion. □

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Disgraced former US Rep. George Santos reports to NJ federal prison to serve 7-year fraud sentence

By PHILIP MARCELO
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Disgraced former U.S. Rep. George Santos reported to a federal prison in New Jersey on Friday to begin serving a seven-year sentence for the fraud charges that got him ousted from Congress.

The federal Bureau of Prisons confirmed that the New York Republican was in custody at the Federal Correctional Institution in Fairton, in southern New Jersey.

Santos pleaded guilty last summer to federal wire fraud and aggravated identity theft charges for deceiving donors and stealing people's identities in order to fund his congressional campaign.

His lawyer Joe Murray, when asked for comment Friday, responded with a brief, all-caps text: "FREE GEORGE SANTOS."

The ever-online Santos, who turned 37 years old on



Former U.S. Rep. George Santos arrives at federal court for sentencing, April 25, 2025, in Central Islip, N.Y.

Associated Press

Tuesday, hosted a farewell party for himself on the social media platform X on Thursday night.

"Well, darlings ... The curtain falls, the spotlight dims, and the rhinestones are

packed," he wrote in a post afterwards. "From the halls of Congress to the chaos of cable news what a ride it's been! Was it messy? Always.

Glamorous? Occasion-

ally. Honest? I tried ... most days."

Santos will serve his time in a minimum security camp at the all-male facility, which also includes a larger medium security prison, accord-

ing to the Bureau of Prisons. In a Thursday interview, he didn't name the prison where he was serving his sentence, but described the camp setting as a "big upgrade" from the medium-security lockup he was initially assigned to.

Among the other notable inmates serving time at Fairton is Lamor Miller-Whitehead. The Brooklyn preacher, known for his flashy lifestyle and friendship with New York City Mayor Eric Adams, was sentenced to nine years in prison last year for fraud.

In April, a federal judge declined to give Santos a lighter two-year sentence that he sought, saying she was unconvinced he was truly remorseful.

In the weeks before his sentencing, Santos said he was "profoundly sorry" for his crimes, but he also complained frequently that he was a victim of a political witch hunt and prosecutorial overreach. □

Chuck E. Cheese employee arrested in iconic mouse mask for using stolen credit card, police say



A Chuck E. Cheese restaurant is shown in San Bruno, Calif., June 25, 2020.

Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE (AP) — Wearing the furry mask of the iconic Chuck E. Cheese mascot mouse, an employee of the popular children's birthday destination was arrested for using a stolen credit card at one of the chain's Florida restaurants, police said. "Chuck E, come with me Chuck E," a police officer in Tallahassee told the suspect, "stop resisting, you are being detained." The arrest occurred Wednesday, according to the probable cause report from police, while photos from bystanders showed an officer removing the man's rodent mask with its gray fur, exaggerated ears and perpetual smile and placing it atop a Tallahassee Police Department vehicle. The investigation began when a woman called police to report that someone was using her child support Visa debit card,

which she hadn't seen since a visit Chuck E. Cheese in late June, police records stated. Charges to the card were made at a smoke shop, grocery store and a Whataburger.

The woman tracked down the suspect by going to the grocery store and viewing surveillance footage from the time her card was used, police records state. She recognized the man from the Chuck E. Cheese. When police officers arrived at the restaurant, one of them entered first to verify that the suspect was there. He was and he wasn't wearing the mask.

The suspect "looked very nervous, he gazed at me with wide eyes and squared shoulders in a tensed demeanor," a police officer later wrote in the probable cause report. □

Hong Kong police offer rewards for tips leading to the arrest of 19 overseas activists

By KANIS LEUNG
Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Hong Kong police announced rewards for information leading to the arrest of 19 overseas-based activists for their roles in what they called a subversive organization abroad, accusing them of violating a national security law imposed by Beijing.

Police said in a statement Friday that the group, Hong Kong Parliament, aimed to promote self-determination and establish a so-called "Hong Kong constitution," alleging it was using illegal means to overthrow and undermine China's fundamental system or overthrow the institutions in power in the city or China.

On request by the police, the city's court issued arrest warrants for activists Elmer Yuen, Johnny Fok, Tony Choi, Victor Ho, Keung Kawai and 14 others. They are alleged to have organized or participated in an election abroad for the Hong Kong Parliament, as well as setting up or becoming members of the group.

According to a Facebook statement by the group on Jun. 30, its election drew some 15,700 valid votes through mobile app and online voting systems. It



Police officers stand guard at a flag raising ceremony to mark the 28th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to Chinese rule in Hong Kong, Tuesday, July 1, 2025.

said the candidates and elected members came from various regions, including Taiwan, Thailand, Australia, the U.S., Canada and Britain.

While the group calls itself Hong Kong Parliament, its electoral organizing committee was founded in Canada and its influence is limited.

Among the 19 activists, police have already offered 1 million Hong Kong dollars (\$127,400) for information leading to the arrest

of Yuen, Ho, Fok and Choi when previous arrest warrants were issued against them.

For the remaining 15 people, rewards of 200,000 Hong Kong dollars (\$25,480) were offered, urging residents to provide information about the case or the people.

"The investigation is still ongoing. If necessary, police will offer bounties to hunt down more suspects in the case," police said.

They also called on those

wanted to stop their actions while they still can, saying that they hoped the activists "will take this opportunity to return to Hong Kong and turn themselves in, rather than making more mistakes."

Yuen said in a Facebook live broadcast that the election was not quite successful in drawing active participation, and that the police campaign would help the group rally support for the resistance movement.

"It helps us with a lot of advertising," Yuen said.

During the live chat with Yuen on Facebook, Sasha Gong, another person targeted by the bounties, accused Hong Kong of becoming a police state. She said she is U.S. citizen and would report her case to the U.S. authorities and lawmakers.

Over the past two years, Hong Kong authorities have issued arrest warrants for various activists based overseas, including former pro-democracy lawmakers Nathan Law and Ted Hui. They also canceled the passports of some of them under a recent security law introduced to the city last year.

The moves against overseas-based activists have drawn criticism from foreign governments, especially given the former British colony was promised that its Western-style civil liberties and semi-autonomy would be kept intact for at least 50 years when it returned to Chinese rule in 1997.

In March, the United States sanctioned six Chinese and Hong Kong officials who it alleged were involved in "transnational repression" and acts that threaten to further erode the city's autonomy. □

Associated Press

'Why isn't he paying?' Trump's golf visit to cost Scottish taxpayers

By KWIYEON HA and BRIAN MELLEY

Associated Press

TURNBERRY, Scotland (AP) — It may not be typical golf attire, but one of the most ubiquitous outfits seen on U.S. President Donald Trump's golf course Friday ahead of his visit was the reflective yellow vest worn by Scottish police.

The standard issue garb that is far removed from the traditional Turnberry tartan was highly visible on the dunes, the beaches and the grass as thousands of officers secured the course in advance of protests planned during the president's visit to two of his Scottish golf resorts.

Trump was expected to arrive Friday evening to a mix of respect and ridicule.

His visit requires a major police operation that will cost Scottish taxpayers millions of pounds as protests are planned over the weekend. The union representing officers is concerned they are already overworked and will be diverted from their normal duties and some residents are not happy about the cost.

"Why isn't he paying for it himself? He's coming for golf, isn't he?" said Merle Fertuson, a solo protester in Edinburgh holding a hand-drawn cardboard sign that featured a foolishly grinning Trump likeness in

a tuxedo. "It's got nothing whatsoever to do with public money, either U.S. or U.K."

Policing for Trump's four-day visit to the U.K. in 2018 cost more than 14 million pounds (\$19 million), according to Freedom of Information figures. That included more than 3 million pounds (\$4 million) spent for his two-day golf trip to Turnberry, the historic course and hotel in southwest Scotland that he bought in 2014.

Police Scotland would not discuss how many officers were being deployed for operational reasons and only said the costs would be "considerable." "The



Police guard the Trump Turnberry golf course in Turnberry, Scotland, Friday, July 25, 2025, ahead of President Trump's visit Scotland.

Associated Press

visit will require a significant police operation using local, national and specialist resources from across Police Scotland, supported

by colleagues from other U.K. police forces as part of mutual aid arrangements," Assistant Chief Constable Emma Bond said. □

Philippine Supreme Court rules impeachment bid against vice president is unconstitutional

By **JIM GOMEZ**

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP)

— The Philippine Supreme Court ruled Friday that an impeachment case filed against Vice President Sara Duterte violated the country's constitution due to a key technicality, a decision that blocks her upcoming trial over a raft of criminal allegations including her threat to have the president assassinated.

The House of Representatives, which impeached Duterte in February and sent the case to the Senate for trial, violated a rule that only one impeachment case could be processed by the lower chamber against an impeachable official in a single year, court spokesperson Camille Ting said.

The House received at least four separate impeachment cases against Duterte between December and February but only one was transmitted to the Senate, which would have served as an impeachment tribunal. The other three impeachment cases were placed in the House's order of business but were archived with no action and "effectively dismissed," according to the ruling.

The ruling was "immediately executory," the court said.



Philippine Vice President Sara Duterte gestures as she speaks during a press conference in Manila, Philippines on Friday, Feb. 7, 2025.

Associated Press

"It is not our duty to favor any political result," the court said in a statement, suggesting it did not pass judgement on the array of allegations. "Ours is to ensure that politics are framed within the rule of just law." Duterte's lawyers welcomed the decision, which they said upheld the rule of law.

"We remain prepared to address the allegations at the proper time and before the appropriate forum," the attorneys in a statement. Duterte, 47, became

the first vice president of the Philippines to be impeached by the House in February over an array of alleged high crimes.

The accusations were led by her threat during a November online news conference to have President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., his wife and cousin, then-House Speaker Martin Romualdez, killed by an assassin if she were killed herself during her high-profile disputes with them.

The daughter of Marcos' controversial predecessor,

Rodrigo Duterte, she also has been accused of large-scale corruption, sedition, terrorism and failing to openly support Philippine government efforts to oppose and denounce China's aggressive actions against Filipino forces in the disputed South China Sea. Duterte allegedly backed her father's brutal crackdowns against illegal drugs that led to extrajudicial killings in their southern home city. Her impeachment trial was set to begin either next week or early next month

by the 24-member Senate, which has convened to hear the case. If the Supreme Court ruling becomes final, the vice president's opponents could file another impeachment case after a year.

Duterte ran as Marcos's running mate in 2022 on a campaign battle cry of unity in their deeply divided and poverty-stricken Southeast Asian country. Both were scions of strongmen accused of human rights violations, but their strong regional bases of political support combined to give them landslide victories.

Their whirlwind political alliance, however, rapidly frayed when they took office.

Duterte's father openly accused Marcos of being a weak leader and a drug addict even during the campaign, allegations the president denied. The vice president later resigned from her then-concurrent Cabinet post as education secretary as the rifts between the two political families deepened.

She later accused Marcos, his wife and Romualdez of corruption, weak leadership and attempting to muzzle her because of speculation she may seek the presidency in 2028 when Marcos's six-year term ends. □

Russian parliament approves a bill punishing online searches for information deemed 'extremist'



Police detain an activist in front of the State Duma, the lower house of the Russian parliament, in Moscow, Russia, Tuesday, July 22, 2025, before lawmakers approved a bill that punishes online searches for information that is deemed "extremist."

Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — The Russian parliament's upper house on Friday quickly approved a bill that punishes online searches for information officially branded "extremist," the latest in a series of moves by authorities to tighten control of the internet.

The legislation makes what it describes as "deliberately searching for and accessing extremist materials" online punishable by a fine of up to the equivalent of \$64.

The bill, which was endorsed by the lower house earlier this week, is now set to be signed into law by President Vladimir Putin. The official definition of extremist activity is extremely broad and includes opposition groups like the Anti-Corruption Foundation, created by the late opposition leader Alexei Navalny, and the "international LGBT movement."

It's not clear how authorities will track

down violators.

Officials and lawmakers said ordinary internet users won't be affected and only those who methodically seek outlawed content will be targeted. They didn't explain how authorities would differentiate between them.

Russians widely use VPN services for access to banned content, but authorities have sought to tighten restrictions and close the loopholes. The state communications watchdog has increasingly used technology to analyze traffic and block specific VPN protocols.

Russian authorities have ramped up their multipronged crackdown on dissent after sending troops into Ukraine in February 2022. Since then, online censorship and prosecutions for social media posts and comments have soared. □

Watch out for Blue Crab Migration near Savaneta



(Oranjestad)—The department of nature & environment in Aruba are urging motorists to watch out for blue crabs crossing the road in Pos Chiquito to make their way to the ocean.

They added a new bright yellow road sign with "Land Crab Crossing" to remind people to be cautious while driving on the highway on Pos Chiquito with blue crabs.

Blue crabs in Aruba are found plenty near the beach areas, especially in Pos Chiquito, because of the amount of man-

groves. They are known to dig holes deep in the beach sand in seek of humidity.

The diet of blue crabs consists of decomposed trees, insects, scorpions and rest of dead animals.

Nesting season for blue crabs is between June & July.

Why protect blue crabs?

Because they are of high value for the ecology of the mangroves. Conserving the blue crabs is crucial for the preservation of mangroves.

Watch out for crossing blue crabs on the highway near Pos Chiquito & Santo Largo. □



Aruba's cultural and literary development: Then and now

(Oranjestad)—The Aruban culture has seen many substantial developments over the course of a century. With the introduction of the Lago Refinery at the turn of the 20th century, followed by the breakout of the Second World War and the general incentive for political independence during the mid-century, a cultural identity on the island began to take form and have since developed through international and local influences.

In the pre-industrial era of the 19th century, much could not be said about a cultural identity on the island. Still being a part of a Dutch colonial territory at the time, as well as not having political or economic autonomy (Curacao was the center of commerce, cultural life, and political management of the Netherland Antilles at the time), the small population of Aruba consisted mostly of farmers and fishermen, tending to their crops and their cattle, or going out to fish to provide for their family. As Quito Nicolaas states in his article *Historia di Literatura Arubiano: E Bida Cultural* (Literary History of Aruba: Cultural Life), "during the pre-industrial period, there were no significant economic activity that could have created a cultural ambience, with only one way to generate profit at the time for the sub existence of Aruban families." It wasn't until the introduction of the Lago Refinery in San Nicolas in 1928, that the island saw a small boom in cultural manifestations and entertainment, as farmers left the 'cunucu' (country) life to work in the refinery, which resulted in Aruba acquiring a different economic pillar. Before this, entertainment and cultural manifestations were mostly experienced by lo-



cal parishes and the island's elite, who often partook in cultural and entertaining activities around the island, like going to the movie theater or coming together to share poetry on Sundays after church.

Literary life

Throughout the 19th century and up until the 1940s, there were also not much trace of a cultural climate for the cultural-literary sector on the island. Primary education was introduced on the island in the mid-19th century, followed by secondary and higher education around the late 30's and 40's. It wasn't until the 1950s, with the introduction of the E.R.N.A agreement in 1951 and the signing of the Statute in 1954, which allowed more space for and control over the economic and cultural development of Aruba, that the literary life on the island began to grow substantially compared to de-

CADES before. This was in response to local institutions established in the 1940s for cultural and literary growth on the island, but that did not yet capture the attention of the general public. The 1950 brought with it a boom of literary production on the island, like those of V.S. Piterrella, as well as migrant authors José Ramón Vicioso y Rings William Rufus, who have also contributed to the literary development on the island. The literary movement was further promoted by local broadcasters Voz di Aruba and Radio Kelboom, with their regular broadcast of literary works.

The 50s and 60s also saw the influence of international cultures, especially that of the United States. During this time, because of international influences as well as the continued prosperity of the oil refinery, cultural traditions in Aruba began to really take form

and become widespread, as different worldly and local concepts were introduced in the Aruban society. With the establishment of local television broadcast station Tele-Aruba in 1963, and with time and possibilities, local programs such as "Nos Tera" ("Our Land") started to pay more attention to the Aruban culture and worked to form a cultural consciousness within the community. The 1960s also saw the rise of local authors and artists, who were more comfortable in producing works in our native tongue, Papiamentu, but who also produced works in Spanish, English and Dutch. This new phenomenon was in response to the interaction between economic growth, individual prosperity, cultural life and literary expression.

The 21st century

Nowadays, international influence on our culture is still prevalent, especially those from Latin America, the United States and The Netherlands. Nevertheless, there also exists a strong cultural identity and traditions that are exclusive to the Aruban culture, often manifesting during traditional celebrations, like Dia di San Juan/ Dera Gai (St. John's Day), Dia di Himno y Bandera (National Hymn and Flag Day), Camping during Easter and much more. With the surge of social media in the last decade, artistic voices, especially those of the younger generation, has become even more prevalent and easily accessible to the community of Aruba through online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. □

Source: *Historia di Literatura Arubiano: E Bida Cultural* by J.R. "Quito" Nicolaas

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Sea turtle conservation by Turtugaruba Foundation

ORANJESTAD — Turtugaruba was founded on September 3rd, 2003, by a group of enthusiastic volunteers. Ten years earlier in 1993, a Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plan (STRAP) was introduced in Aruba and the rest of the Caribbean as an initiative of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). Tom Barmes, who was working at DLVV (Department of Agriculture, Husbandry and Fishery) was one of the writers of the STRAP for Aruba, together with Karen Eckert, director of WIDECAST (Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network). This is how sea turtle conservation started on the island following a plan that is still complied with today.

Tom formed a group of volunteers around him like an organization such as DLVV, because nature does not know office hours. This group of volunteers used the name Widecast Aruba and today there are still a few of them active. They first started protecting the Leatherback Sea Turtle nests on Palm Beach and Eagle Beach. This group also investigated which other species of sea turtles use Aruba as their nesting habitat and which beaches are used by them. For



a period of 25 years, a study has been conducted in which investigators monitored the beaches every morning to study turtle movement. Now, there is a good overview of sea turtle nesting activities.

There are 4 different species of sea turtle that visit Aruba to lay their eggs, each with their own specific season:

- Leatherback Sea Turtle - Leder-schildpad - Driekiel (March – September)
- Loggerhead Sea Turtle - Dikkop-schildpad - Cawama (May – Sep-

- tember)
- Hawksbill Sea Turtle - Karetschildpad - Caret (June – December)
- Green Turtle - Soepschildpad - Turtuga Blanco (July-November)

Investigators also reached a better understanding and overview of the biggest threats to the sea turtles' existence in Aruba and how these problems should be tackled. Despite the hard work all those years, most problems have not really gone away. Luckily—and thanks to the enormous efforts from the volunteers, the sea turtles are still here. On Aruba, the sea turtles are threatened with extinction by pollution, people driving ATVs on dunes and beaches and the loss of nesting beaches due to coastal development for tourism. Because coastal development comes with artificial lighting, these can cause major issues for sea turtles. Female turtles usually come ashore at night looking for a dark beach to make her nest. However, a dark beach is hard to find here nowadays. Light causes stress and can result in her returning to the sea without laying her eggs. Furthermore, artificial lighting causes disorientation for the baby sea turtles (hatchlings).

They crawl towards artificial light sources (like streetlights, hotel lights, etc.) and end up walking in the opposite direction towards the hotels and away from the sea. In the 90's, it was a common occurrence to find complete nests of about 70 hatchlings dead on the street due to being run over by passing cars. Thanks to their protection methods and a lot of time and effort, the volunteers of Turtugaruba have managed to get this under control. However, for long-term prevention, there must be less light visible on the beaches and a strict regulation of it. Sea turtles simply need dark nesting beaches for their survival. It is clear that even more coastal development would not make the situation better for the sea turtles. Do we need more hotel rooms? And even busier beaches? These are the choices that Aruba has to make. Do we want to leave a place for the sea turtles? Not only do we need sea turtles, but so does the rest of the world! Sea turtles play a vital role in keeping our oceans healthy. The Green Turtle, for example, keeps the sea grasses on the bottom of the sea short and therefore a healthy place for many fish to deposit their eggs. The Leatherback, the largest turtle of the world, eats mainly jellyfish and helps maintain the balance between jellyfish and plankton. Despite the threats that exist on Aruba, the turtles still keep coming. That's why today Turtugaruba is especially proud of the volunteers and the many people and organizations of our community that carry a warm place in their hearts for the sea turtles. All four species are active now, which means all hands on deck in the field for us, the volunteers. We strive to keep the sea turtles, our oldest 'repeat guests', always coming back to Aruba and get the chance to reproduce here. □



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Magnet Perfume Jewelry & Cosmetics | The Lazy Lizard
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Sun catchers: The different lizards in Aruba

ORANJESTAD – Colorful or camouflaged, you're bound to encounter a variety of lizards basking in the sun or scurrying on their way in our island. From the charming, friendly iguanas to the good-luck gecko Pega-Pega, you're bound to meet a few of these special residents during your visit.

Aruba, as a desert island, is home to an incredible variety of unique and colorful species. Among them we can find different lizards, most of which have South American origins. But there are a few exceptions.

Iguanas



Iguanas are easy to spot, as they are larger than most other lizards and when young, have a bright green color that makes them stand out.

The iguanas usually found in Aruba are the Iguana iguana, known as the green iguana, or locally as Yuwana. The Yuwana are a mostly herbivorous species, and can grow up to 2 meters in size, including the tail, making them one of the largest in the iguana family. As you will see, despite their name, as they reach adulthood, the iguanas can take on a grey or blue tone instead of the

bright green displayed by the young ones. In Aruba – as in the rest of the Kingdom of the Netherlands – the most usual color varies from green to lavender, black and sometimes a reddish brown.

Yuwana is a protected species, as it is listed under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), meaning that international trade is regulated through the CITES permit system. In the past, Arubans used to eat a popular Yuwana soup, as it was believed to give strength and help restore health – probably due to the protein boost it delivered. However, it is now illegal to catch, kill, buy or sell Yuwanas in Aruba, and this includes eating them!

Turnip-tailed gecko

The turnip-tailed gecko is known locally as the Pega-Pega, meaning sticky-sticky, due to the way it sticks to walls using the suction in its little fingers. They are found inside houses, and are mostly a nocturnal animal.

According to Etnia Nativa, the local Pega Pega is immediately recognizable by its large size, with a body length of up to 12 cm, and its large, swollen tail, approximately the same length or slightly shorter than its body; females are larger and more robust than males. It has short, robust legs with flattened toes and extensive basal webbing.

The undersides of its toes

are covered in lamellae, which are used as friction pads to cling to smooth vertical surfaces. Some can even walk around completely upside down. Its toes are covered with ridges, which are peppered with millions of microscopic bristle-like structures called setae that attach and detach when the animal wills them to, and they never get gunked up.

They are variable in coloration, from a mottled dark gray to orange-brown, and are capable of changing color depending on their mood and surroundings. Mottled and banded markings aid in camouflage against tree bark. They are harmless and fragile; you can hold one in your hands as long as you are VERY gentle.

Never put pressure on its tail because it will surely drop as a measure to try to distract the predator, and they are different from other lizards because they're long-lived, talkative, lack eyelids, and their small scales are situated next to each other like cobblestones rather than overlapping as is the case in most other lizards.

Turnip-tailed Geckos are insectivorous and feed on cockroaches, grasshoppers, beetles, flies, mosquitoes, and spiders, which makes them the best pest control to have at home! They spend their days concealed in dark tree grooves and cavities, in narrow crevices in the walls, or behind paintings, which provide the perfect shel-

ter for them. Pega pega is a gecko endemic to our island, but in time, some 4-5 intrusive gecko species have been observed, some of which do not cease to amaze us with the racket they make, especially during the hours of the night.

The Pega-pega Phyllodactylus Julieni is also a protected species in Aruba, by law. It is illegal to kill them!

Blue Kododo



These are one of the most striking lizards in Aruba, recognizable by the male's bright blue color. The Aruban whiptail lizard, Cnemidophorus arubensis, is a species endemic to Aruba, meaning you can only find it here on our One Happy Island! They are also recognized as the most common and populous lizard on the island. While the male is blue with white dots, the female is brown with blue dots.

These charming lizards eat mostly plants, such as flowers, nectar, leaves and fruits, and occasionally enjoy some insects. They are selective in which plants they eat, because of the toxins present in many available plants species. The Kododo help take care of Aruba's vegetation by playing a significant role in

the dispersal of seeds for certain plants: when they eat fruit, they excrete the seeds in diverse locations, contributing to the reproduction cycle of our local plants.

Striped anole

The striped anole (Anolis lineatus) that lives in Aruba is known locally as Waltaka or Toteki. This is a species of lizard in the family Dactyloidae, and they are native to Aruba and Curaçao. It is usually found in dry areas, commonly where there are not large trees; rather they enjoy rocks, walls or tree trunks, as they prefer to stay close to the ground.

These lizards are about 7cm in length, have a brown color with a stripe on each side and typically, several stripes on the body and tail that are lighter in color. It has a dewlap which is orange-yellow – and what's unique about this species is that it is the only known species of anole where the dewlap is asymmetrically colored, with one side being a deeper orange and the other side a lighter yellow. Mostly this is seen in the males, as it is almost imperceptible in the females. If the Toteki shows you his dewlap, retreat! This is not a friendly greeting! Lizards are wonderful creatures that are precious to our fragile, local ecosystem. Please be mindful of these residents as you enjoy your stay. □

Images: Some images are from Aruba Birdlife Conservation.

Forgotten gems Open air movie theaters

(Oranjestad)—During the span of over 100 years, Aruba only saw five open air movie theatres. Now practically obsolete on the island, these theaters were once frequently visited by locals and migrants in the 20th century.

The first open air theater was constructed in 1920 and was commissioned by Shon Eduard (Eddy) de Veer. This theater was located at the Hotel Colombia in Oranjestad, which is now where the Aruban census office is located. The theater was simple; it



only consisted of a screen, and visitors had to bring their own chairs to enjoy the popular silent movies of the time.

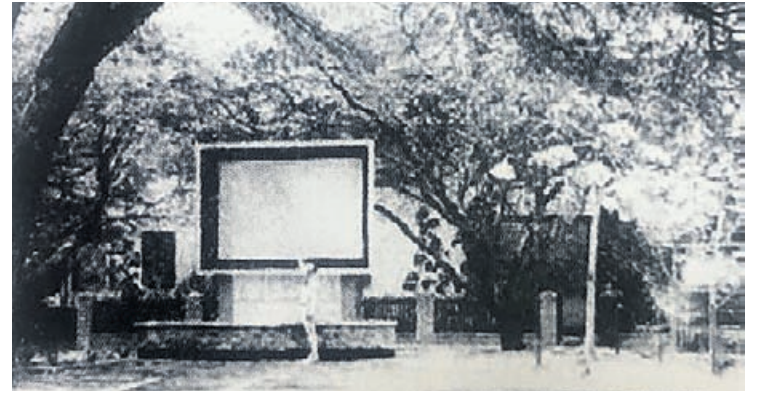
American migrants who worked in the refinery and lived in the Lago Colony in Sero Colorado also had their piece of the pie with their Open air Theatre, which formed part of the Esso Club, also known as the Pan-Am Club. It was at this theater that "Talkies" were first streamed, movies with sound. This theater mostly streamed American blockbusters for the American expats, this way making sure that these migrant were not missing out on entertainment from their home land.

In the 1950's and 60's, Savaneta saw their own open air theater, located in front of the Marinier's Kazerne (Marine Barracks). This the-

ater was mostly visited by the neighboring marines, who didn't have much entertainment other than movies at that time.

The last and most recent open air theater was constructed in the form of a drive-in theater. A popular American concept, the Drive Inn located in Balashi was a hot spot for teenagers, who had the habit of cramming all their friends in one car to go see the movies. For this phenomenon there was a separate price that you had to pay called the "car crash".

This theater closed around 2012, but was re-opened during the pandemic in July 2020, where movies were streamed on a gigantic screen set up in front of stacked containers. However, this nostalgic form of entertainment did not last very long as it was closed



again only a year or two later. Nowadays you can still see the stacked containers when you drive near the bridge in Balashi. □

Source: "De kolibrie op de rots en meer over de geschiedenis van Aruba" by Evert Bongers.



Monuments in Oranjestad: Town House and Cas Veneranda



(Oranjestad)—If you've ever taken a stroll through main street Oranjestad, you may have stumbled upon a big green house with beautiful colonial design. This legendary house, now used as a town hall for civil marriages, was once owned by a wealthy doctor and formed part of the elite neighborhood in Oranjes-

tad.

Jacobo Eloy Arends was an Aruban physician, and in lived in Oranjestad during the 1920s. In 1922, he married Maria Monica Lacle, the daughter of well-known business man at the time, Adriaan Lacle. The two lived a posh life in the city center, and their man-

sion—once the center for neighborhood parties—now serves as a public town hall for civil marriages and is a cultural monument on the island.

The house was designed by architect Chibi Wever, and constructed under the leadership of famous master carpenter, Dada Picus, who was famous at the time for his construction of beautiful buildings.

The construction of the house started once Jacobo and Maria got engaged. It is said that during the time of construction, Maria was not allowed to see the building nor be anywhere near the construction site. It wasn't until after her honeymoon that she saw the completed mansion for the first time, furnished entirely by her sisters-in-law.

The mansion also contained the doctor's office, as well as a pharmacy. After the death of Jacobo, the house was inherited by his son, an Aruban dentist,

who converted Jacobo's office into his own dental practice. Over the years, the house was rented and used by third parties, but eventually fell into disrepair, as the maintenance cost became too high to cover.

The land was sold to Land Aruba in 1986, but it did not see a renovation until 1997. Nowadays, it serves to host weddings, and is attached to a modern building situated behind—the Aruban census office.

Jacobo and Maria's mansion was situated in front of another famous mansion, owned by Jacobo's brother Frederico Maxi-

miliaan (Machi) Arends. Frederico was married to Veneranda (whom the mansion was named after). Their house was also constructed by Dada Picus, utilizing Veneranda's design vision that was inspired by a house she saw in Cartagena, Colombia.

Nowadays, this mansion lies in ruins. However, the Aruban government announced its official restoration last year, with ongoing steps to convert this monument into a governmental office and public space for visitors of Oranjestad. □

Source and pictures credited to: "De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over the geschiedenis van Aruba)" by Evert Bongers.



The district of Savaneta: The capital before Oranjestad

(Oranjestad)—Before Oranjestad became the island nation's capital, Aruba's first capital was the district of Savaneta. Here is where the cultural identity of Aruba was born, and from where the rest of the island developed into what it is today.

Savaneta is said to have been the first place where the Caquetio inhabitants first stepped foot on the island. Though there isn't hard evidence to back this up, but considering the legend of the Cacique Arua, it is believed that there were already movements on Aruba—and Savaneta—around 88 AD.

The Caquetios probably made their way to the island either from Venezuela, Colombia or other Caribbean islands in the region, but with good weather it was relatively easy for them to travel back and forth in their canoes. So, since the Caquetios discovered the island, Aruba found her first form of civilization.

It wasn't until 1499 when Aruba met another group of people who set foot on the island: the Spanish explorer Alonso de Ojeda. De Ojeda first took notice of Aruba off the coast of Venezuela, during his exploration of the Latin American country. This was on August 9th, 1499. However, de Ojeda didn't actually sail to the island till 4 days later, on August 23rd, 1499. This was the beginning of the Spanish era on Aruba (1499-1636).

Alonso usually didn't stop at every island or land he saw, especially not in the Caribbean. He would often take notice of land from afar and continue sailing. However,

Aruba was an exception. He had heard that there were "quebracho" trees on the island, which were commonly used to produce dye or paint. But since these trees could not be found in Savaneta, he continued to search in the area of what is now known as Santa Cruz. The best way to transport the tree barks was via a route passing through Savaneta, and so the first road between Savaneta and Santa Cruz was made.

The Dutch colonial era (1636-1805) During the 80-year war between The Netherlands and Spain, Dutch explorers and merchants began to travel to the ABC islands. Once they landed in Aruba, they deported the small Arawakan and Spanish community that was living on the island. This was the beginning of colonization of the ABC islands by the Dutch empire. Around the same, the West Indian Company (WIC) was born. Bonaire and Curaçao were mostly used for plantations, where the Dutch had transported slaves from Africa. Aruba, on the other hand, was mostly used to raise cattle and to house the haring factory. The Dutch had often forced the indigenous community to work for them.

In 1636, when the Netherlands won the war against Spain, the country surrendered the islands to the Dutch.

The Dutch administration appointed the island's first commander, an Irish man named N. Williams. Because the Dutch were interested in other Caribbean islands and countries in South America, they imported Dutch merchants and business



Commandeursbaai (Commander's Bay) at Savaneta

men, all of whom resided in Savaneta. This way, Savaneta officially became the island's first capital.

However, at the end of the 18th century, the commander at the time, J.R. Lauffer, moved his office to what is now "Horse Bay" in Oranjestad. Because the highest office on the island moved away from Savaneta, the capital lost its title to what was called then Playa.

How Savaneta got its name

The name Savaneta probably has a Spanish origin. It was said that when the Spanish climbed a hill called Yara, they saw that the area was mostly open and had no big trees. In Spanish, such a land area is called a "sabana".

Because of its land surface, Savaneta was a great place to construct cattle farms. From here, the farmer culture on Aruba was born. Before the Aruban Gold Rush and the construction of the Refinery in San Nicolas, most residents were farmers, and Savaneta had many inhabitants that farmed fruits and vegetables. They also continued the tradition of raising cattle, like goat, sheep, pigs and horses. Savaneta was one of the first places on the island to have a general farming culture. From this culture, many other traditions were born, like the Dera Gay Holiday that we celebrate every year on June 24th. □

Source: Historia di Savaneta (History of Savaneta) by Adolf "Dufi" Kock.



Alonso de Ojeda



"Quebracho" (Kibrahacha) tree; used to make dye and paint

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Narrows down

7 Miles off

11 Slanted type

12 Lion's pride

13 One of the Gorgons

14 Daring

15 National park in Alaska

17 Casual eatery

20 Ship of 1492

23 "Not — dare!"

24 Illusory sights

26 Stir-fry pan

27 Commotion

28 Solid wood

29 Newspaper issue

31 Purpose

32 Kidney-related

33 Meaty dish

34 Sleeve insert

37 Steel ingredient

39 Twin of Artemis

43 Clumsy oaf

44 Detected

45 "Why don't we!"

46 Like ranked players

DOWN

1 Director Burton

2 Had something

3 Knee protector

4 Steer clear of

5 Ascend

6 Checkout act

7 Aviator Earhart

8 Slowly disappearing

9 With 41-Down, "Life of Pi" director

10 Spanish king

PASSE RABID
ACTOR ASIDE
THE DARK HALF
HEM SUE SET
DEBIT
REFER NUDES
AREA LOGE
TREND BINGE
SUM UP
SOB VAN HOT
THE DEAD ZONE
INGOT LANCE
ROSES EPEES

16 Kitchen wear

17 Shrink in fear

18 Battery end

19 Successfully misleading

21 Make sport of

22 Crooked

24 Posts

25 Groom's answer

30 Heckles

33 Go piece

35 Lip

36 Dueling weapon

37 Suffering

38 Sturgeon eggs

40 Hallucina-

41 See 9-Down

42 Bizarre

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11						12			
13						14			
		15			16				
17	18	19			20			21	22
23				24	25				
26				27			28		
29			30				31		
32						33			
		34			35	36			
37	38				39		40	41	42
43					44				
45					46				

8-2

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

8-2 CRYPTOQUOTE

N L S K B P Z E S A R A X W C F C

M S G W F E X W F M N N L F N A F K

I J C N F E P J N C F U W N L W T P M X G .

— O M F K N V W N W M C W K

Cryptoquote: AUGUST IS THE BORDER BETWEEN SUMMER AND AUTUMN; IT IS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL MONTH I KNOW. — TOVE JANSSON

Cruise ship Schedule: July 17 - 30 2025

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
THU	17	CARNIVAL CELEBRATION	08.00	17.00	C	1
SUN	20	FREEWINDS - Dept.	****	22.30	E	-
TUE	22	CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	23.00	C	1
WED	23	CELEBRITY REFLECTION	07.00	16.00	C	1
		FREEWINDS	06.00	****	E	1
SUN	27	FREEWINDS - Dept.	****	22.30	E	-
WED	30	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	08.00	23.00	C	1
		FREEWINDS	06.00	****	E	1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.



Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 8 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.



Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.



Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku

		4				5		
		3	1				9	
8	6	9		5		4		
4		1	5			2	6	
	3			7			5	
	2	6		9				
		7	2				1	8
								2
1			9			4		

Difficulty: ★★★★★

7/26

Answer to previous puzzle

9	1	7	2	3	5	4	8	6
3	4	5	6	8	9	2	1	7
6	8	2	1	4	7	5	9	3
8	2	6	3	9	1	7	5	4
7	9	3	8	5	4	6	2	1
1	5	4	7	6	2	9	3	8
2	3	1	5	7	6	8	4	9
4	6	8	9	2	3	1	7	5
5	7	9	4	1	8	3	6	2

Difficulty: ★★★★★

7/25

The U.S. fertility rate reached a new low in 2024, CDC data shows



The toes of a baby are seen at a hospital in McAllen, Texas, on Wednesday, July 29, 2020.

Associated Press

By **MIKE STOBBE**
AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The fertility rate in the U.S. dropped to an all-time low in 2024 with less than 1.6 kids per woman, new federal data released Thursday shows. The U.S. was once among only a few developed countries with a rate that ensured each generation had enough children to replace itself about 2.1 kids per woman. But it has been sliding in America for close to two decades as more women are waiting longer to have children or never taking that step at all. The new statistic is on par with fertility rates in western European countries, according to World Bank data.

Alarmed by recent drops, the Trump administration has taken steps to increase falling birth rates, like issuing an executive order meant to expand access to and reduce costs of in vitro fertilization and backing the idea of "baby bonuses" that might encourage more couples to have kids.

But there's no reason to be alarmed, according to Leslie Root, a University of Colorado Boulder researcher focused on fertility and population policy.

"We're seeing this as part of an ongoing process of fertility delay. We know that the U.S. population is still growing, and we still have a natural increase more births than deaths,"

she said.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released the statistic for the total fertility rate with updated birth data for 2024. In the early 1960s, the U.S. total fertility rate was around 3.5, but plummeted to 1.7 by 1976 after the Baby Boom ended. It gradually rose to 2.1 in 2007 before falling again, aside from a 2014 uptick. The rate in 2023 was 1.621, and inched down in 2024 to 1.599, according to the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics.

Birth rates are generally declining for women in most age groups and that doesn't seem likely to change in the near future, said Karen Guzzo, director of the Carolina Population Center at the University of

North Carolina.

People are marrying later and also worried about their ability to have the money, health insurance and other resources needed to raise children in a stable environment.

"Worry is not a good moment to have kids," and that's why birth rates in most age groups are not improving, she said.

Asked about birth-promoting measures outlined by the Trump administration, Guzzo said they don't tackle larger needs like parental leave and affordable child care.

"The things that they are doing are really symbolic and not likely to budge things for real Americans," she said.

Increase in births in new data

The CDC's new report, which is based on a more complete review of birth certificates than provisional data released earlier this year, also showed a 1% increase in births about 33,000 more last year compared to the prior year.

That brought the yearly national total to just over 3.6 million babies born.

But this is different: The provisional data indicated birth rate increases last year for women in their late 20s and 30s. However, the new report found birth rate declines for women in their 20s and early 30s, and no

change for women in their late 30s.

What happened? CDC officials said it was due to recalculations stemming from a change in the U.S. Census population estimates used to compute the birth rate.

That's plausible, Root said. As the total population of women of childbearing age grew due to immigration, it offset small increases in births to women in those age groups, she said. □

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San Nicolas

Imsan 24 hours
Tel. 524 8833

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Paradera: Tel. 588 6638
San Nicolas:
Centro Medico: Tel. 584 5794

OTHER

Dental Clinic 587 9850
Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002
Urgent Care 586 0448
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic
+297 588 0539

EMERGENCY

Police	100
Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas	587 5900
Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

TRAVEL INFO

Aruba Airport	524 2424
American Airlines	582 2700
Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

AID FOUNDATIONS

Aruba Food Bank
Tel. 588 0002
FAVI- Visually Impaired
Tel. 582 5051
Alcoholics Anonymous
Tel. 736 2952
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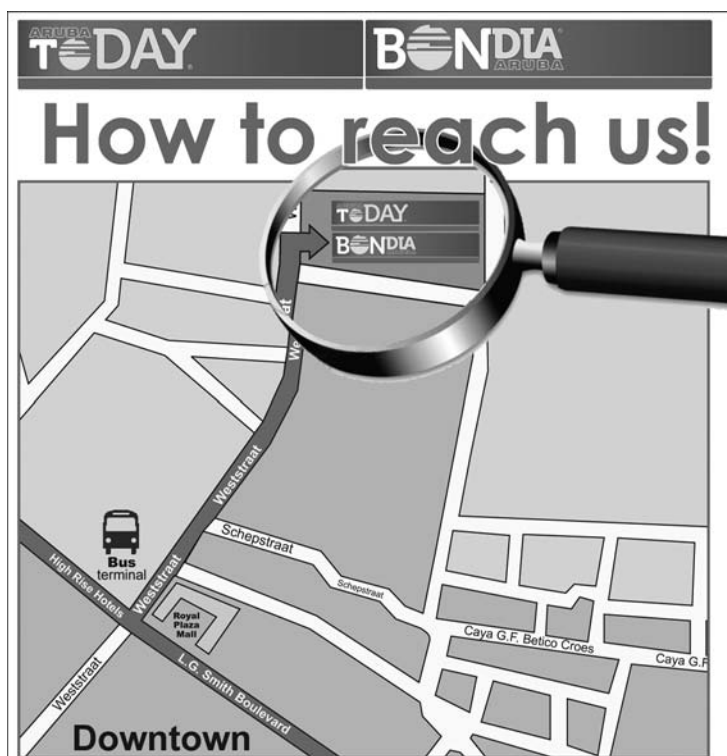
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS



Teens say they are turning to AI for friendship

By JOCELYN GECKER
AP Education Writer

No question is too small when Kayla Chege, a high school student in Kansas, is using artificial intelligence. The 15-year-old asks ChatGPT for guidance on back-to-school shopping, makeup colors, low-calorie choices at Smoothie King, plus ideas for her Sweet 16 and her younger sister's birthday party.

The sophomore honors student makes a point not to have chatbots do her homework and tries to limit her interactions to mundane questions. But in interviews with The Associated Press and a new study, teenagers say they are increasingly interacting with AI as if it were a companion, capable of providing advice and friendship.

"Everyone uses AI for everything now. It's really taking over," said Chege, who wonders how AI tools will affect her generation. "I think kids use AI to get out of thinking."

For the past couple of years, concerns about cheating at school have dominated the conversation around kids and AI. But artificial intelligence is playing a much larger role in many of their lives. AI, teens say, has become a go-to source for personal advice, emotional support, everyday decision-making and problem-solving.

'AI is always available. It never gets bored with you'

More than 70% of teens have used AI companions and half use them regularly, according to a new study from Common Sense Media, a group that studies and advocates for using screens and digital media sensibly.

The study defines AI companions as platforms designed to serve as "digital friends," like Character. AI or Replika, which can be customized with specific traits or personalities and can offer emotional support, companionship and conversations that can feel human-like. But popular sites like ChatGPT and Claude, which mainly answer questions, are being



Bruce Perry, 17, demonstrates the possibilities of artificial intelligence by creating an AI companion on Character AI, Tuesday, July 15, 2025, in Russellville, Ark.

Associated Press

used in the same way, the researchers say.

As the technology rapidly gets more sophisticated, teenagers and experts worry about AI's potential to redefine human relationships and exacerbate crises of loneliness and youth mental health.

"AI is always available. It never gets bored with you. It's never judgmental," says Ganesh Nair, an 18-year-old in Arkansas. "When you're talking to AI, you are always right. You're always interesting.

You are always emotionally justified."

All that used to be appealing, but as Nair heads to college this fall, he wants to step back from using AI. Nair got spooked after a high school friend who relied on an "AI companion" for heart-to-heart conversations with his girlfriend later had the chatbot write the breakup text ending his two-year relationship.

"That felt a little bit dystopian, that a computer generated the end to a real relationship," said Nair. "It's almost like we are allowing computers to replace our relationships with people."

How many teens are using AI? New study stuns researchers

In the Common Sense Media survey, 31% of teens said their conversations

with AI companions were "as satisfying or more satisfying" than talking with real friends. Even though half of teens said they distrust AI's advice, 33% had discussed serious or important issues with AI instead of real people.

Those findings are worrisome, says Michael Robb, the study's lead author and head researcher at Common Sense, and should send a warning to parents, teachers and policymakers. The now-booming and largely unregulated AI industry is becoming as integrated with adolescence as smartphones and social media are.

"It's eye-opening," said Robb. "When we set out to do this survey, we had no understanding of how many kids are actually using AI companions." The study polled more than 1,000 teens nationwide in April and May.

Adolescence is a critical time for developing identity, social skills and independence, Robb said, and AI companions should complement not replace real-world interactions.

"If teens are developing social skills on AI platforms where they are constantly being validated, not being challenged, not learning to read social cues or understand somebody else's

perspective, they are not going to be adequately prepared in the real world," he said.

The nonprofit analyzed several popular AI companions in a "risk assessment," finding ineffective age restrictions and that the platforms can produce sexual material, give dangerous advice and offer harmful content. The group recommends that minors not use AI companions.

A concerning trend to teens and adults alike

Researchers and educators worry about the cognitive costs for youth who rely heavily on AI, especially in their creativity, critical thinking and social skills. The potential dangers of children forming relationships with chatbots gained national attention last year when a 14-year-old Florida boy died by suicide after developing an emotional attachment to a Character. AI chatbot.

"Parents really have no idea this is happening," said Eva Telzer, a psychology and neuroscience professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

"All of us are struck by how quickly this blew up." Telzer is leading multiple studies on youth and AI, a new research area with limited data.

Telzer's research has found that children as young as 8 are using generative AI and also found that teens are using AI to explore their sexuality and for companionship. In focus groups, Telzer found that one of the top apps teens frequent is SpicyChat AI, a free role-playing app intended for adults.

Many teens also say they use chatbots to write emails or messages to strike the right tone in sensitive situations.

"One of the concerns that comes up is that they no longer have trust in themselves to make a decision," said Telzer. "They need feedback from AI before feeling like they can check off the box that an idea is OK or not."

Arkansas teen Bruce Perry, 17, says he relates to that and relies on AI tools to craft outlines and proof-read essays for his English class.

"If you tell me to plan out an essay, I would think of going to ChatGPT before getting out a pencil," Perry said. He uses AI daily and has asked chatbots for advice in social situations, to help him decide what to wear and to write emails to teachers, saying AI articulates his thoughts faster.

Perry says he feels fortunate that AI companions were not around when he was younger.

"I'm worried that kids could get lost in this," Perry said. "I could see a kid that grows up with AI not seeing a reason to go to the park or try to make a friend."

Other teens agree, saying the issues with AI and its effect on children's mental health are different from those of social media.

"Social media complemented the need people have to be seen, to be known, to meet new people," Nair said.

"I think AI complements another need that runs a lot deeper our need for attachment and our need to feel emotions. It feeds off of that."

"It's the new addiction," Nair added.

"That's how I see it." □

Venus Williams is back and she is not done. She heads to Cincinnati next and maybe the U.S. Open

By HOWARD FENDRICH

AP Tennis Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — After Venus Williams' four-match-es-in-four-days return to professional tennis was over, after she was loudly feted by appreciative fans even after a loss in singles, the D.C. Open stadium announcer offered a thought: "We're never going to say goodbye to Venus Williams, are we?" he said.

Not yet, anyway.

This was not a one-stop hello-and-farewell appearance for the 45-year-old Williams, who had been away from the tour for 16 months before showing up in Washington this week and winning once each in singles and doubles.

She hadn't won a match since 2023, and the owner of seven Grand Slam singles titles, plus 14 in women's doubles with her sister Serena and another two in mixed doubles, was celebrated by the spectators and other players.

"I'm sorry to have (fallen) short," Williams said after being eliminated by 24th-

U.S. Open later next month, if the U.S. Tennis Association awards her a wild-card entry. The USTA already announced that Williams asked for an invitation to play with Reilly Opelka in the tournament's newfangled mixed doubles event.

Williams made quite obvious that the whole experience in Washington was fun for her. She loves the challenge.

She loves playing tennis.

about having a good time. She wants to win, too.

"There's so many learnings from here. I know exactly what I need to work on, where I can improve. The good news is I'm always in control of the point. The important part is to put the ball in," Williams said with a smile. "So this is one thing I didn't do today. Was I in control? Absolutely. Will I be in control of most of my matches? Most likely, yes. That's the place I want to be, so I'm putting myself in that position. That's what counts."

At the end of her final news conference in Washington, Williams spoke about her takeaways from the matches she played and the work she put in to make them possible after needing to stay off the court last year because of surgery for uterine fibroids. Her answer sounded a bit like a warning to other players out there who will face her. "I'll reflect on this match and the things I could have done better. I'll reflect on my preparation going into the matches to make sure I'm prime and ready. Those are the kind of things. But more than anything, I take a lot of information from this tournament. So much data," Williams said. "Like, I can't wait to get on the



ranked Magdalena Frech 6-2, 6-2 on Thursday night, "but I know I can play better. And I know I will play better." Yes, there will be more: Williams next heads to the Cincinnati Open in August. That's certain. And she also might very well be competing at the

Plus, what's not to like about so much adulation from so many? "Everything is about her (at) this tournament. All the media, all the fans everyone is for her," Frech said. "She's a superstar. She's a legend here." There's more to it, though. Because Williams also made clear that this is not merely

Williams still can hammer a serve, as the series of aces she delivered at more than 110 mph during her straight-set victory Tuesday against 35th-ranked Peyton Stearns showed. Still can pound forehands and backhands, too. As Stearns put it: "She played some ball tonight."

practice court. My coach and I were already talking about what we're going to work on and also how much better I got so quickly in these last few weeks, too, was kind of like straight up a mountain." Then she paused and added: "So we have made so much progress, and I expect that there will be more." □

Venus Williams lunges for the ball during a match against Magdalena Frech, of Poland, at the Citi Open tennis tournament Thursday, July 24, 2025, in Washington.

Associated Press

Arensman wins 19th stage of Tour de France, Pogačar moves closer to title

LA PLAGNE, France (AP) —

Dutch rider Thymen Arensman launched a daring solo attack on a long final climb and held on grimly to win the 19th stage of the Tour de France on Friday. Although race leader Tadej Pogačar took a step closer to a fourth Tour title, the Slovenian star could not catch Arensman. He finished the stage in third place behind Dane Jonas Vingegaard, who just beat Pogačar to the line.

It was a rare success for the two-time Tour winner

Vingegaard over Pogačar in this year's race but ultimately made little difference, since Pogačar is 4 minutes, 24 seconds ahead of Vingegaard with two stages left.

Vingegaard could not drop Pogačar on Friday's shortened stage, which featured a 19.1-kilometer (11.8-mile) finish up to the ski resort of La Plagne.

Arensman had shown his climbing ability with a stunning solo effort last Saturday to win a mammoth mountain stage.

He made his move this time with 13 kilometers left. Pogačar and Vingegaard marked each other at first and chose not to follow.

By the time they did, it was too late and Arensman won the stage by 2 seconds.

"Tadej and Jonas are the strongest in the world, almost aliens, and I'm human," the 25-year-old Arensman said. "I can't believe I beat them today. I tried to not look behind."

Moments after crossing the line, Arensman put his hands



Netherlands' Thymen Arensman crosses the finish line to win the nineteenth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 93.1 kilometers (57.85 miles) with start in Albertville and finish in La Plagne, France, Friday, July 25, 2025.

Associated Press

on his face and wept as he sat on the ground against

a crash barrier, panting heavily with exhaustion. □

Trump signs order to clarify college athletes' employment status amid NIL chaos

By WILL WEISSERT
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Thursday signed an executive order mandating that federal authorities clarify whether college athletes can be considered employees of the schools they play for in an attempt to create clearer national standards in the NCAA's name, image and likeness era.

Trump directed the secretary of labor and the National Labor Relations Board to clarify the status of collegiate athletes through guidance or rules "that will maximize the educational benefits and opportunities provided by higher education institutions through athletics." The order does not provide or suggest specifics on the controversial topic of college athlete employment.

The move comes after months of speculation about whether Trump will establish a college sports commission to tackle some of the thorny issues facing what is now a multibillion-dollar industry.

He instead issued an order intended to add some controls to "an out-of-control, rudderless system in which competing university donors engage in bidding wars for the best players,



Wake Forest running back Demond Claiborne (1) runs back a kick return for a touchdown during the first half of an NCAA college football game against Miami, Saturday, Nov. 23, 2024, in Miami Gardens, Fla.

who can change teams each season."

"Absent guardrails to stop the madness and ensure a reasonable, balanced use of resources across collegiate athletic programs that preserves their educational and developmental benefits, many college sports will soon cease to exist," Trump's order says. "It is common sense that college sports are not, and should not be, professional sports, and my administration will take action accordingly."

There has been a dramatic increase in money flowing into and around college athletics and a sense of chaos. Key court victories won by athletes angry that they were barred for decades from earning income based on their celebrity and from sharing in the billions of revenue they helped generate have gutted the amateurism model long at the heart of college sports.

Facing a growing number of state laws undercutting its authority, the NCAA in

July 2021 cleared the way for athletes to cash in with NIL deals with brands and sponsors deals now worth millions. That came mere days after a 9-0 decision from the Supreme Court that found the NCAA cannot impose caps on education-related benefits schools provide to their athletes because such limits violate antitrust law.

The NCAA's embrace of NIL deals set the stage for another massive change that took effect July 1: The ability of schools to begin

paying millions of dollars to their own athletes, up to \$20.5 million per school over the next year. The \$2.8 billion House settlement shifts even more power to athletes, who have also won the ability to transfer from school to school without waiting to play.

At Big Ten Conference football media days in Las Vegas, Purdue coach Barry Odom was asked about the Trump order.

"We've gotten to the point where government is involved. Obviously, there's belief it needs to be involved," he said. "We'll get it all worked out. The game's been around for a hundred years and it's going to be around 100 more."

The NCAA has been lobbying for several years for limited antitrust protection to keep some kind of control over this new landscape and avoid more crippling lawsuits but a handful of bills have gone nowhere in Congress. Trump's order makes no mention of that, nor does it refer to any of the current bills in Congress aimed at addressing issues in college sports.

NCAA President Charlie Baker and the nation's largest conferences both issued statements saying there is a clear need for federal legislation. □

Associated Press

MLS suspension of Messi and Alba is 'draconian,' Inter Miami owner says



Inter Miami defender Jordi Alba, left, and forward Lionel Messi chat as they arrive before the start of an MLS soccer match against Toronto FC, Wednesday, Sept. 20, 2023, in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Associated Press

By ALANIS THAMES
AP Sports Writer

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — The owner of Inter Miami called Major League Soccer's suspension of Lionel Messi and Jordi Alba for skipping the All-Star Game a "draconian" punishment.

"They don't understand the decision," owner Jorge Mas said Friday of the one-game suspensions. "They don't understand why not attending an exhibition match leads directly to a suspension."

Messi and Alba did not suit up for the match between the MLS and Liga MX of Mexico despite being voted to the game. Messi did not play to rest amid a packed schedule and Alba was dealing with a previous injury. Mas said the club made the decision for Messi and Alba to sit out of the All-Star Game.

Per MLS rules, any player who doesn't participate in the All-Star Game without prior approval from the league is ineligible to compete in their club's next match.

The players will miss Miami's home match Saturday against FC Cincinnati, which sits atop the Eastern Conference standings. Both Messi and Alba practiced with the club on Friday in anticipation of playing in Saturday's match before MLS announced the suspension. □